

## Abstract 214

**TITLE:** HIV/AIDS Research Training Program: Integrating the Community in Primary Prevention Research Efforts in Puerto Rico

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**ISSUE:** The scarcity of Latino/a professionals as HIV/AIDS researchers is a serious problem regardless of the affirmative action efforts of the past decades. For more than two generations the issue of recruiting and maintaining minorities in careers in science continues to be a serious concern. Further, minority communities impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic need culturally competent research findings to support their behavioral and social interventions.

**SETTING:** The Latino **HIV/AIDS Research Training Program (L RTP)** has been developed at the University of Puerto Rico, funded by the NIAID, to address research training issues around the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the need for culturally competent research. Collaborating units include the University Center for Psychological Services and Research of the Department of Psychology, the School of Medicine, the School of Public Health, the Graduate School of Social Work, the University Center for HIV/AIDS Education and Research, the Puerto Rico Department of Health, and two local CBO's: FundaciónSIDA and Community Research Initiative.

**PROJECT:** The objective of this program is to train Latino/a researchers that can develop interdisciplinary and multimethod HIV/AIDS research for the Latino/a population with the express long term goal of increasing the number of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos/as in HIV/AIDS research careers. The Program has identified research projects in the participating units as possible sites for fellows to have a two year research and mentorship experience. Summer internship experiences have also been identified. Fellows participate in a weekly research seminar, identify a research site among participating units, and collaborate in the identification of guest consultants and in the implementation of a skill building conference for the community.

**RESULTS:** The L RTP has identified diverse academic, governmental and community settings as participating research sites. Fellows have joined research and intervention projects at each unit as part of their training development and as a way to enhance the conceptual framework and theory-based prevention interventions of the community. The Program has recruited fellows for the next two years, identified internships for summer 1999 and has planned a consultation visit on Policy issues for fellows and all participating units.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The possibilities of joint efforts between academic research training and prevention settings in the community are endless. University research centers, the Health Department STD/HIV prevention program and community-based organizations can benefit from this collaboration effort in the development of prevention theory applied to the local needs of HIV/AIDS prevention in Puerto Rico.

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